National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

A 1-year study of the epidemiology of hepatitis A virus in Tunisia

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Abstract:

This 1-year (September 2000 to August 2001) prospective study investigated the presence of hepatitis A virus (HAV) in the population of Monastir, Tunisia (86 serum samples), in the influents and effluents of two wastewater treatment plants, and in shellfish harvested in the coastal areas of Monastir, Bizerte and Sfax (January 2001 to May 2001). The virus was detected by RT-PCR using primers targeted at the VP3-VP1 region. An epidemic of HAV infection was observed during the winter months, with a peak in January. The presence of the virus was relatively constant in the influents and effluents of the wastewater treatment plants, and the virus was found in shellfish from the Monastir area during the months of January and February. The genotype IA strain was recovered most frequently from human serum and wastewater samples. The observation that the peak of the epidemic was during the winter months suggests that transmission of HAV is related to climatic factors and, presumably, to shellfish consumption.

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Resource Description

Exposure : ☑

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Food/Water Quality

Food/Water Quality: Biotoxin/Algal Bloom

Geographic Feature: ☑

resource focuses on specific type of geography

Ocean/Coastal

Geographic Location: ☑

resource focuses on specific location

Non-United States

Non-United States: Africa

African Region/Country: African Country

Other African Country: Tunisia

Health Impact: ☑

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Infectious Disease

Infectious Disease: Foodborne/Waterborne Disease

Foodborne/Waterborne Disease: Marine Toxin Syndrome

Foodborne/Waterborne Disease (other): Hepatitis A

Medical Community Engagement: ☑

resource focus on how the medical community discusses or acts to address health impacts of climate change

A focus of content

Resource Type: ☑

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article

Timescale: ☑

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified